

May 17, 2017

VIA HAND DELIVERY

Attorney General Brad Schimel
Wisconsin Department of Justice
17 West Main Street
P.O. Box 7857
Madison, WI 53703

RE: Department of Justice Sexual Assault Kit Backlog Status

Dear Attorney General Brad Schimel:

We are writing with regard to a *Wisconsin State Journal* article (enclosed) which highlighted the Department of Justice's (DOJ) continued struggle to make any meaningful progress on eliminating Wisconsin's sexual assault kit backlog, and your Department's pattern of disseminating misinformation about sexual assault kit testing status and progress.

We have grave concerns, not only about the DOJ's lack of urgency in kit testing, but also about inconsistent and inaccurate sexual assault kit numbers reported by your Department. This is not the first time the DOJ has given erroneous numbers about sexual assault kit testing, as mere months ago your Department indicated "hundreds" of sexual assault kits had been tested, only for it to be revealed days later in a *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* article (enclosed) that only nine kits had actually been tested.

It is unfortunate these communication problems persist, and these recurring instances do not instill confidence in the DOJ's ability to manage sexual assault kit testing with the sensitivity, diligence, and poise sexual assault survivors deserve. In light of these problems, we would like an official answer from you and your Department addressing the following inquiries:

- The actual number of untested kits currently in Wisconsin's inventory;
- The actual number of kits that DOJ has tested thus far;
- The actual number of kits that have been designated for testing but that have not yet been tested;
- Of the actual number of kits that have not been designated for testing, the reason those kits will not be tested, and the percentage breakdown for each reason;
- The actual number of untested kits that have been sent to private and state labs, respectively, for testing

We expect that answering these inquiries will help promote accountability and transparency in reducing the sexual assault kit testing inventory in Wisconsin, while ultimately ensuring sexual assault survivors are treated with the dignity and respect we know they deserve.

Thank you for your consideration and we appreciate your prompt attention and response to this correspondence. We are hopeful that given the importance of this matter and in the interest of public awareness and limiting the continued spread of misinformation, that you will respond to this communication no later than close of business on Monday, May 22, 2017.

Respectfully,

Representative Melissa Sargent
48th Assembly District

Representative Chris Taylor
76th Assembly District

Enclosures (2):

- (1) *Wisconsin State Journal*, "Wisconsin DOJ says many more untested sexual assault kits than previously reported"
- (2) *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, "State has tested only 9 backlogged rape kits"